

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-28 were pending. Claims 1, 9, 18, and 28 have been amended. Claims 1-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,154,465 to Pickett or Pickett in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,406,004 to Hall *et al.* (hereafter Hall). In light of the amendments and the following remarks, the undersigned requests withdrawal of the rejections.

I. The Present Invention

As was discussed previously, the present invention relates to a telephone communications interface for a computer that provides electrical power to attached telephones. For example, amended claim 1, recites, in part, wherein a peak voltage of the ringing signal is provided to no more than approximately one half of the maximum number of telephones at a time, and wherein all of the telephones are on separate circuits. The cited references, either taken individually, or in combination, do not disclose these claim elements.

II. The Cited References

A. Pickett

Pickett was previously discussed. The Examiner agreed that Pickett did not disclose ringing less than all the telephones at a time or that all of the telephones are on separate circuits (Office Action at page 3).

B. Hall

As also previously discussed, Hall appears to disclose generating a ringing signal for use on party lines. As is known, with party lines, multiple telephones are coupled to the same telephone circuit, hence the term "party line."

First, amended claim 1 is patently distinct over the Hall reference for reciting, in part, "wherein all of the telephones are on separate circuits." Hall only discloses Bell System party lines, in which "up to four subscribers may be simultaneously attached to one line," and

independent telephone company party lines, in which "up to five phones may be simultaneously connected to a party line." (col. 20, lines 32-34, 53-55). Because Hall makes no disclosure of a system in which "all of the telephones are on separate circuits," amended claim 1 is patently distinct over the Hall reference for at least this claim limitation. Pickett does not make up for this deficiency in Hall.

Moreover, amended claim 1 is patently distinct over the Hall reference for reciting, in part, "wherein a peak voltage of the ringing signal is provided to no more than approximately one half of the maximum number of telephones at a time."

Hall discloses that a common ringing signal is supplied simultaneously to **EACH** telephone. The "ring generator serves all the line cards which are coupled to all the telephone lines in the system." (col. 21, lines 44-45). However, not all phones ring at the same time. This is because although the ringing signal is provided to each telephone on the party line (or multiple party lines if there are multiple line cards), the ringing signal is provided either in different polarity/line combinations or at different frequencies; and that each phone is responsive to either 1) the different polarity/line combination or 2) the different ringing frequency. In both cases, the common ringing signal is supplied to EACH telephone simultaneously, with particular phones ringing, depending on the particular phone's pre-selected responsvity. In particular, Hall discloses:

1) Bell System Party Lines

On Bell System party lines, each telephone on the party line is "responsive to a different type ringing signal. That is, one phone may be made responsive to a ring signal having a first characteristic such as a 20-hertz ringing signal superimposed upon a positive 48-volt DC level on the tip line. A second phone may be made responsive to a ring signal having a second characteristic such as a twenty-hertz tone superimposed upon a negative 48-volt DC signal on the tip line. A third phone may be made responsive to a twenty-hertz ringing signal superimposed on a positive 48-volt DC signal on the ring line. Finally, the fourth phone may be made responsive to a twenty-hertz ringing signal superimposed on a negative 48-volt DC signal imposed upon the ring line." (col. 20, lines 38-50, emphasis added). Thus, for example, in order

to ring a particular phone, "a twenty-hertz [sic] ringing signal is superimposed upon a 48-volt positive DC level imposed upon the tip line," causing "only the telephone which is responsive to the positive 48-volt DC level on the tip line" to ring. (col. 21, lines 25-27, 31-32, emphasis added).

2) Independent Telephone Company Party Lines

"A different ringing scheme is utilized by the independent telephone companies for party lines in that the independents use different frequencies. That is, up to five phones may be simultaneously connected to a particular party line. Each phone on the line may be made responsive to a ringing signal of a different frequency, such as by a band pass filter." (Col. 20, lines 51-57, emphasis added).

In party lines operated under both the Bell System and the independent telephone company structure, the ringing signal is applied to all the telephones at the same time. The ringing selectivity is accomplished, not by selectively providing the ringing signal "to no more than approximately one half of the maximum number of telephones at a time," as recited, in part by amended claim 1, but by providing the ringing signal to all phones simultaneously and configuring the phones to selectively respond to either a different polarity/line combination or a different ringing frequency. In both cases, Hall discloses a system in which the ringing signal is applied to all the telephones at the same time and selectivity is achieved through phones with differing responsibility.

Thus, amended claim 1 is patently distinct over the Hall reference for reciting, at least, the claim element of "wherein a peak voltage of the ringing signal is provided to no more than approximately one half of the maximum number of telephones at a time."

Because, at least these claim elements are not disclosed by either the primary or secondary reference, taken individually; or in combination, amended claim 1 is in a condition for allowance.

Claims 2-8

Claims 2-8, which depend from claim 1, are in a condition for allowance, for at least the reasons discussed in relation to claim 1, and more specifically, for the additional limitations they recite.

Claim 9

Amended claim 9 recites, in part, "wherein the ringer circuitry is configured to provide a peak voltage of the ringer power to no more than approximately one half a maximum number of telephones that may be coupled to the telephone server at a time, and wherein all of the telephones are on separate telephone lines." As discussed in relation to claim 1 above, neither the primary or the secondary reference disclose ringer circuitry "configured to provide a peak voltage of the ringer power to no more than approximately one half a maximum number of telephones that may be coupled to the telephone server at a time" or that "all of the telephones are on separate telephone lines." For at least these reasons, as well as for the additional limitations it recites, claim 9 is in a condition for allowance.

Claims 10-17

Claims 10-17, which depend from claim 9, are in a condition for allowance, for at least the reasons discussed in relation to claim 9, and more specifically, for the additional limitations they recite.

Claim 18

Amended claim 18 recites, in part, "wherein a ringer circuit is configured to provide the ringing drive voltage to a subset of a maximum number of telephones that may be coupled to the telecommunications interface at one time, and wherein all of the telephones are coupled to separate telephone lines." As discussed in relation to claims 1 and 9 above, neither the primary or the secondary reference disclose a ringer circuit "configured to provide the ringing drive voltage to a subset of a maximum number of telephones that may be coupled to the telecommunications interface at one time" or that "all of the telephones are coupled to separate

Appl. No. 09/228,710
Amdt. dated May 26, 2004
Reply to Office Action of January 14, 2004

PATENT

telephone lines." For at least these reasons, as well as for the additional limitations it recites, claim 18 is in a condition for allowance.

Claims 19-28

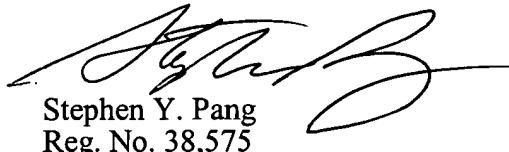
Claims 19-28, which depend from claim 18, are in a condition for allowance, for at least the reasons discussed in relation to claim 18, and more specifically, for the additional limitations they recite.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen Y. Pang
Reg. No. 38,575

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP
Two Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3834
Tel: 650-326-2400
Fax: 415-576-0300
SYP:CCL:dhe

60221033 v1